Is Gerard in love with Ventura? I try to figure this out during his long conversation with her. I am almost inclined to see in his pursuit of her a mere sport, of which the difficulty constitutes the chief attraction. Yet there is no denying that Gerard has changed, considerably. Even if he is not really in love, at least he wants to please. And he almost succeeds, The look in his eyes, no longer that of a child, has taken on a sort of softness that might be taken for depth.

This morning, long conversation with Bonnier, my architect. You are aware that he is aware that he is talking to a man of letters; when I ask for news of his brother's unfortunate madness, he replies: *. . . We told ourselves: it's the crack—you know — of Arvers's *'Sonnet'"* Doubtless he is "thinking of Sully-Prudhomme's *"Vase brise"* which Mme de Janze used to call "the poem of the *Vase casse"* ("Oh! Monsieur Manuel/' she would exclaim, 'please recite to us the charming *Vase casse* which you read so well!")[2]

Copeau tells me he is greatly disappointed by Claudel's *"Ode*[9];[3] so far I have not been able to read it attentively. Jammes's enthusiasm got in my way.

Copeau, with a subtle mind like that of a Jew (at first I thought he was a Jew): "I haven't any great fear for you," I told him; "I feel that you are well armed." He smiled. <f"Yes, I think so too,'* he replied; "and yet I don't get anywhere. Do you know what I need? A milieu. Yes, I have no milieu."

Read in Stendhal's *Journal,* that remark would be considered very discerning. Yes, of course you are right. But, in a few months, how the "milieu" can stand in your way! At twenty my youth, my long hair, my sentimental manner, and a frock-coat that my tailor had turned out beautifully made me acceptable in the drawing-rooms of Mme Beul£ and the Countess de Janze. If I had continued to frequent them, I

should be writing today for the *Revue des deux mondes** but I should not have written the *Nourritures.* I escaped early from that world, in which, to appear proper, I had to watch myself too closely.

I tried rather hard to direct Gerard toward Liane de L., who would have been an easier conquest than Ventura, but nothing availed; he

* StiHy-Pradhomme's popular poem about the heart that is broken like the beautiful vase becomes ludicrous when tiie word *cass&* is substituted for its near synonym *brise.* And to confuse it with F<§lix Arvers's equally popular sonnet about an unavowed love is a real howler.

[s] Qaudel's first ode, "The Muses," was published in 1905.

*A very conservative literary review, generally considered a stepping-stone to the French Academy.